



TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMMISSION

CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

TO: Transportation Safety Commission Members, Council members, City Manager Kurt Hodgen, Assistant City Manager Evan Vass

FROM: Thanh H. Dang, Public Works Planner

DATE: November 20, 2008

RE: Transportation Safety Commission Minutes for November 6, 2008 Meeting

The Transportation Safety Commission met on Thursday November 6, 2008, 9AM, at the Community Development classroom at 409 S. Main Street.

Members and Advisory Members present included: Bill Blessing (Chairman), Thanh Dang, Drew Williams, Len Van Wyk, MPO Greg Deeds, Ben Wyse and Reggie Smith.

Citizens are always provided the opportunity to voice their views/concerns about any item before the commission. It is the policy of the Commission to move the agenda item to the beginning of the meeting when citizens attend Commission meetings to avoid detaining citizens for the entire meeting. However, any citizen is welcome to stay for the entire meeting.

Welcome

Old Business

1. Railroad Crossing at S Main Street and Country Club Road – Update

Awaiting approval letter from Norfolk Southern.

2. Waterman Dr & Chicago Drive Intersection – No Updates

3. Denton's building parking lot and southwest corner of Court Square – Update

Ms. Dang shared that City staff would like to explore alternative options for this location. Mr. Sellers, owner, is in support of safety, and made mention that the planters previously proposed may be susceptible to damage by vehicles hitting it. (Vehicles occasionally hit the corner of the buildings.)

4. Removal of signal at intersection of Mason & Bruce Streets – Update

The signal will be placed on “flash” in December to begin the signal removal study. City staff will wait until after the Urban Exchange is occupied until further consideration is made to remove the signal.

5. Bluestone Hills Drive Neighborhood Traffic Calming – Update

A neighborhood meeting was held on Wednesday November 5, 2008 at which over 30 neighbors attended. Staff in attendance included: Ms. Dang, Mr. Williams, Mr. Jim Baker, Sgt. Keller, and Officer Deeds. The Commission discussed some of the issues presented and recommended that parking be restricted from the “curve” on Bluestone Hills Drive. Discussions regarding bicycle lanes were also had. *Note: It was discovered after the meeting that the pavement width on the entire length of Bluestone Hills Drive is only 30 feet, not 36 feet for a section as previously believed. With only 30 feet, bicycle lanes cannot be accommodated.*

6. Peach Grove Avenue – Update

Ms. Dang suggested that flashing lights be installed at both ends of the school zone. The cost of flashing lights is about \$9,000 per set of two. Commission members agreed that the look of the road is faster than it is – it appears to be a 35 mph road. Mr. Van Wyk also suggested that Linda Lane has the same issues. It was also discussed that other schools may benefit from flashing lights.

Commission members continued discussion about the possibility of changing the speed limit on Peach Grove Avenue to 35 mph and to install flashing lights and signage for 25 mph at the beginning and end of the school day. Public Works will explore this possible opportunity further with the Police Department.

7. Bicycle & Motorist Education – Update

Ms. Dang suggested that bicycle & motorist education efforts continue to be lead by the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (HRMPO)’s Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee. Several members from the Transportation Safety Commission are also members of the MPO Bike/Ped Committee (Mr. Van Wyk, Mr. Blessing, and Ms. Dang).

City Span has a slide on bike safety running. Ms. Dang will be contacting JMU Communication’s professors for their assistance on materials focused towards college students. Unless there is a specific need or question, this item will not show up on next month’s agenda.

New Business

8. Fence between Mike’s Electronics & Pawn Shop, N Main St

Ms. Dang presented a request made by a citizen for the Commission to review a fence/sight distance concern between Mikes Electronics, 288 N Main St, and Pawn Emporium, 268 N Main St. It was discussed that vehicles from commercial properties should not be backing out into a public street and customers of Mike's Electronics have enough room around the site to turn their vehicle around. Additionally, there is a second entrance on to Rock Street, to exit properly. The fence also does not violate any zoning ordinances.

Commission members agreed to have Chairman Blessing write a letter to the citizen describing its findings and also write a letter to the owner of Pawn Emporium to request that they consider taking down part or their entire fence.

9. Lee Avenue and Third Street

Ms. Dang presented a sight distance concern at the intersection of Lee Avenue & Third Street. A citizen described difficulty in crossing Third Street because vehicles are parked close to/at the intersection. The Commission agreed with Public Works staff and Police Officers present that a written letter to the vehicle owners should be sent. The letter will give notice that City Ordinance prohibits vehicles from being parked within 20 feet of an intersection and that violators may be ticketed.

10. Special Presentation: Officer Greg Deeds "Police Chief's Challenge"

Officer Deeds presented the Harrisonburg Police Department's Virginia Law Enforcement Challenge. A variety of police department programs and partnerships were shared. Examples: Officer trainings, driver and officer recognition programs, public information and education, promoting traffic safety, speed watch program, motor carrier safety, traffic task force, etc.

11. Other Business

Mr. Smith made mention that all the City departments handled the Obama Event on October 28 well, especially with short notice. He also mentioned that this is an example of when individuals should be encouraged to ride the buses more instead of driving their cars.

NEXT MEETING: The next Transportation Safety Commission meeting will be on Thursday November 4, 9AM, at The Transportation Department, 475 E Washington St.